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SONGS AND SONG-LEGENDS

OF

DAHKOTAH LAND.

EDWARD L. FALES.

1652

ST. PAUL, MINN.:
THE HIGHLAND PUBLISHING CO.
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IN FANCY BLEST.

My spirit soars on pinions light
Beyond the life that would confine,
And now are all the joys of bright
And perfect vision mine.

I feel no more the night of pain,
Since fortune walks no more with fate;
The flower of love reveals no stain,
And hearts admit no hate.

If life were sweet in every breath,
What soul would long from earth to fly?
If happiness were found in death,
Who would not dare to die?

In life perfection is not found,
While death is only perfect rest;
Then let me quit this gloomy bound
And be in fancy blest!

THE DAHKOTAH WARRIOR.

Lightly treads the cunning warrior
On the trail he follows true ;
Softly sing his feathered arrows
To the stately bucks in view ;
Fiercely does he give them battle,
Who would drive him from the graves
Of his people, the Dahkotch—
Race that brings forth braves.

Well he knows the friendly challenge
Of the white gull's piercing cry,
When the foam is on the billows,
When the threatening storm-clouds fly,
And his birch canoe is bounding
O'er the wild Messipi waves,
In the land of the Dahkotch,
In the land of braves.

Finding beauty in the wild flowers,
Temples in majestic trees,
Music in the morning bird-songs,
Voices in the changeful breeze,
Healing in its fragrant breathing
When his brow its coolness laves,—
In the land of the Dahkotch,
In the land of braves.

Hearing in the mighty thunder
Rumbling down the hills of cloud,
Manitou's voice—his glance beholding
Where the lightning's fire has ploughed ;
Feeling him in starry midnights,
Or in dark and echoing caves,—
In the land of the Dahkotch,
In the land of braves.

Skins are plenty in his wigwam,
Hunting grounds have known him long ;
Scalps are countless on his lodge-pole,
For his arm is quick and strong :
He's a warrior in the west land,
Where the squaws alone are slaves,—
In the land of the Dahkotch,
In the land of braves.

FOND HEARTS OF THE FOREST.

A LEGEND OF FOUNTAIN CAVE, NEAR ST. PAUL.

The hazy gloaming gathers round,
The silence mellows every sound,
The gentle wind through foliage nigh
Begins to breathe its plaintive sigh;
While o'er the hill creeps silver light
Where calm and chaste the queen of night,
Awaking from her daily trance,
Doth charm all nature with her glance
Her virgin train sweeps down the glade;
Kissing the cavern's mouth of shade
She smiles upon the singing brook,
With sparkles filling every nook
That lurks about its dimpled face,
Giving its deepest shadows grace,
And breathing on its grassy mane
A gloss it ne'er can hope to gain
Beneath the sun's more kingly ray.
Wierdly the purling waters play
In her embrace; then break away
To vanish under bending boughs,
But giving voice to gurgling vows
Of future tryst, of love again
Where meet the river banks and glen.
The moonlight vaults beyond the trees
To gain the river side, and sees
A dusky virgin sitting there,
Who twines her lovely raven hair
And frequent lifts her melting eyes
To where the flashing ripple flies
Across the bosom of that glass
Where dancing stars nocturnal pass.
A princess of the wildwood she,
And graceful as the deer that flee
When stricken by the light winged shaft
So deadly from the hunter's craft.

The river sings beneath her feet ;
It finds an echo in the sweet
And tender thought that throbs behind
The starry curtains of her mind.
And when the thrills that sweep her heart
Now from her tongue in music start,
The wavelets beating on the strand,
The murmuring leaves by zephyrs fanned,
The minor rythms that wake the bowers
Of this fair glen when evening lowers,
And warbling birds, melodious throng,
All mingle with her low love song.
Her voice is all that's wild and sweet,
And slow must be that warrior's feet
Who would not speed with all his heart
To see her red lips meet and part.
Love moves her with his golden sway—
A young and stalwart Chippewa
Has gained her heart, and kindred ties
And tribal feuds her love defies.
What cares she that her people hate
And his give back without abate ?
What cares she that he is not Sioux ?
If he but keep his promise true !
She sings an old song, passion-laden
By many a dead Dahkotah maiden :

O where is my lodge—my love ?
O where is the lord of my breast ?
Reveal me, Great Spirit above,
The arms where my passion may rest.

Brave warriors are thick as the leaves
That follow the wind in the fall ;
Each maiden may think she receives
The smile of the noblest of all ;

But I know a chief who can slay
The panther and bear with his hand,—
As warm and as proud as the day,
And braver than all in his band.

In his sinewy arms I shall rest,
And hear his voice call me "sweet dove !"
O he is the lord of my breast !
With him is my lodge and my love !

She stops ; she turns with sudden start,
With troubled eyes and beating heart,
To the frowning bluffs, where warlike cries
And sound of savage revel rise.
The warriors of her tribe are there,
All dancing in the firelight glare.
Their spears with reeking scalps are clad,
Their thoughts are blood, their brains are mad :
Each yelling brave now only knows
Fierce hatred for his ancient foes.
They boast of all their deeds of might,
Of secret slaughter, deadly fight,
And woe to him who comes to meet
The lonely maid, Wenonah sweet,
If they his paddle's dip shall hear
Or after learn his presence near.
When their wild revel, to her fright,
Rose wilder with the fall of night,
She stole away and gained this place
To see again her lover's face.
She gazes on the distant shore,
But all is quiet as before.
Again she sings, her flute-like tones
So low that were the very stones
On which she rests her feet possessed
With sense to hear, what she confessed
In tuneful cadence would be lost
To them, for well she knows the cost
For him who loves her, if her thought
Be told aloud, and so there naught
Breaks on the air but melody.
If spoken, thus her song would be :

My love is strong, my love is brave,
His heart is warm and true ;
He soon will come across the wave
And bear me in his light canoe,
To be his queen and slave.

To me he bowed his eagle plume,
He tamed his eagle eye,
And vowed his love would life consume
If I refused with him to fly,
His teepee to illumine.

O come, my chief! I watch—I wait,
I give up all for thee;
If thou wilt have an alien mate,
Wenonah longs thy mate to be,
That she may share thy fate.

Come quickly, love, but make no sound,
My people are thy foes,
If thou shouldst here by them be found
A warrior's death thy life would close,
Thy soul be skyward bound.

But what would poor Wenonah do
If she were left alone?
She scarce would see the hand that slew
Ere she would raise her death-chant tone,
And with thee perish too!

She scans the echoing cliff once more,
Then turns to view the farther shore,
And bending low she strives to hear
Some sound to tell her he is near.
O'er all there seems to fall a hush
As tender as her cheek's warm blush.
Now firmly rooted to the spot—
As though she had all things forgot—
She looks like some wild, charm-bound elf,
As lifeless as the moon itself.

But no! the parted lip and eye
Of flashing fire such thought belie,
And well and eloquent avow
The soul beneath that rigid brow.
O virgin heart! O passion bright!
That fills a glance with beauty's light.
O Wenijishid, happy thou,
Who surely will not tarry now!
A moment thus—then up she springs,
And now the song she softly sings
Floats o'er the water from her lip
To meet the noiseless, constant dip
Of Wenijishid's paddle blade.
How swift to greet the faithful maid
He comes. She waits, 'tween joy and fear,
While on he glides, each stroke more near.
Love gives him more than wonted strength,

And on the beach he leaps at length.
With trembling joy, with artless grace,
She springs into his glad embrace.
Within her brave young hero's arms
Forgot are all her past alarms.
One rapturous kiss with quick impress,—
His burning hands her locks caress,—
And then they gaze, at love's sweet will,
Eye into eye with answering thrill.
"Wenonah darling, since we met,
Not once could I that smile forget
Which told me (more than words could tell)
The hopes that made this bosom swell
Were fair in our Great Spirit's sight.
He, ere another moon's swift flight,
Shall bid me take thee to my home
And joy in thee, no more to roam."
Her trustful voice is low and clear,
And sweetest music in his ear :
"No chief is braver, none more bold
Than he whose neck my arms enfold.
He dares the light the moonbeams make
And danger courts for my poor sake.
List! Wenijishid, hearst thou not
Those yells of warning? Though this spot
Rests now beneath a peaceful spell,
How long it will so we cannot tell.
Thy heart is big, and like a rock
Will meet the blood-storm's awful shock ;
But I am weaker—and I fear
For thee each moment thou art here.
Behold how now the moonlight meets
And with a kiss each ripple greets ;
Wenonah's heart, o'erflowed with bliss,
Is wholly thine, and thine her kiss."
The radiance mingled with the shade—
The murmur low by night winds made—
The rune, harmonious and complete,
Of wavelets in their ceaseless beat—
The fragrance given of sleeping flower—
The brooding hush that fits the hour,—
With this fair scene all these are met
To make the scene more lovely yet.

Wenonah's kiss would all confess,
It gives to beauty holiness ;
The moments passing seem to be
Endowed with all eternity,
And in this lonely spot, love found
Brings the whole universe in bound.
But hark ! what sound the breezes bear
That turns her gladness to despair ?
Wenonah trembles like a reed,
With hunted look she turns to plead :
" O Wenijishid, leave me, quick !
For dangers gather round thee thick.
We are discovered, and thy death
May hang upon each wasted breath.
Fly for thy life ! Too late ! too late !
Together we must meet our fate."
He smiles, and there with dauntless front
Would meet the coming foemen's brunt,
But she who will not leave his side
Bears in her hand his warrior pride,
And hopes of joyous life with her
Are sweeter than the battle's stir.
His war-whoop's taunt rings through the glen,
While answering come the cries of ten.
Wenonah clasps his brawny arm,
And lest his love might come to harm
He turns to where his birchen boat
Seems chafing to be set afloat,
And ere their foes have gained the strand
The light canoe beneath his hand
Leaps off before a foaming track.
He flings a yell of triumph back,
And grimly smiles as on he flies
To hear their disappointed cries ;
Yet lest they may too soon pursue,
He urges on the flight anew.
He plies the paddle with a will,
They skim the waves,—but swifter still
A vengeful arrow cleaves the air,
To sink between his shoulders bare.
The shock is cruel, and the blade
Falls from his hand ; his powers all fade
Like thought, and plunging on his face,
Deathlike he lies. Now to his place

Wenonah springs ; with bloodless lip,
 With gleaming eye and nervous grip,
 She works the paddle with a force
 Of which but love could be the source.
 Beyond the range of bow, she flings
 The blade aside and fiercely brings
 Her wounded hero to her breast.
 Now sadly called, now wildly pressed,
 He breathes at last a feeble sigh,
 And feeling sure he will not die
 She labors strongly, full of hope
 And nerved with any fate to cope.
 She gains the shore, and stoutly bears
 Her chief through brush and wild beast lairs.
 All through the night she speeds her flight
 To where his people's fires burn bright.
 When friendly, helping hands are found,
 And she has given him to their care,
 She sinks upon the leafy ground
 Panting like a hunted hare.
 Her faithful powers have filled their task,
 Their sacred trust no more need ask,
 And now the goal is gained, they bind
 Oblivion's charm around her mind.

* * * *

Young life is pliant, love will give
 A mighty motive still to live.
 And when he wakes, with deep surprise
 He meets the dark and glorious eyes
 Of dear Wenonah on him bent
 In passion's hope absorbed, content.

* * * *

Since this took place it is not known
 How many changing moons have flown ;
 Yet still, when Luna's rapiers bright
 Pierce through the tenuous robe of night,
 And shining on the stilly shore
 Create again the scene of yore,
 Wenonah and her lover true
 Pass over in their white canoe ;
 Their spirit forms unshadowed glide
 Across the rapid, glistening tide.

ANPETUSAPA.

A LEGEND OF ST. ANTHONY FALLS.

'Tis autumn, and the breezes lift
Their melancholy tones;
'Tis evening: through each passing rift
The stars, like precious stones
In lustrous beauty (clouded soon),
Sweet incense to the sight,
Attend their white-robed mistress moon,
The queen of romantic night.
Anon, as the cloud hosts fly
Before the wind across the sky,
The court of the queen is suddenly seen,
With its pomp sublime and array
Of sparkling and glittering sheen,
More lovely than the light of day,
More glorious than the twilight gleam
That mingles with the sun's last beam
Where the waves of ocean play.

By the river's bank a wandering band
Have reared their teepee walls,
Here where the warriors all may stand
And view the mighty falls.
The ivory moon is mounting high,
The lodge fires flicker low,
And slumbering forms are visible by
The embers' last faint glow,
When lightly steps a youthful brave
Out from the forest ways
Into the star-roofed nave,
Out from the shadowing trees
(Leaves fluttering slow in the slow night breeze)
Into the broad, revealing rays,

Into the silvery glow
Which only such sweet hours may know
When lovely Night, though throned on high,
Reveals her wealth of charms below,
When dewy turf and moss banks nigh
Are lit with radiance from the sky.

With step as bouyant as the air
He glides above the glistening sward;
The largest, whitest teepee there
Doth seem to center his regard,
For there his unmarked path doth end,
And there his burning glances send
Their passionate lightnings, wild, yet all
Made reverent by the spot on which they fall.
This lodge doth tower
Above the poles on every hand
Like some strange chieftain o'er his band.
Why comes he at this hour?
Hath dark revenge a purpose here?
Shall bloody strife appear
On such a scene? Ah, no! the power
That spurs him hath a softer spell;
For here the tribe's most cherished flower,
The daughter of the chief, doth dwell.

He has fought with his love o'er and o'er,
For he thinks he should glory in nothing but war;
But his mind is a stranger to peace
While forcing his lips to be dumb,
While trying his passion to quell,
For the beat of his heart will not cease
Its burden of gladness to tell,—
So hither at last he hath come
To give it a full release.

His deep, rich voice floats down the glade,
In soft, unwonted tones
Like gentle winds through pine-tree cones;
He sings the Warrior's Serenade;
While at the end of every strain—
With more effect his cause to plead—
He plays a wild and shrill refrain
Upon a flute of rude-cut reed.

Lonely warbling bird of night !
Leave thy bough and perch above
The silent, dewy folds of white
That screen my sleeping love.
Drink the moonlight rays that fall
Pure and mellow, like the beams
Of starry eyes beyond my call
Far in the land of dreams.
Tell her I am brave and strong,
Tell her I have loved her long ;
Singing softly like a dove,
Tell her all you know of love
I cannot tell in song.

Tell her I am waiting here
At the threshold of her bower ;
Winds are lifting far and near
The sweets of every flower,
All the stars are out in state,
Music breathes in every stir,
Yet all of nature seems to wait
For a glimpse of her.
Tell her I am brave and strong,
Tell her I have loved her long ;
Singing softly, like a dove,
Tell her all you know of love
I cannot tell in song.

Is it the wind that swings apart
The deerskin door from the lodge away
Is it a sudden leap of his heart
That makes too vivid fancy play ?
Or is it a nut-brown arm that holds
The trembling folds,
And are those liquid eyes that shine
Like diamonds fine ?
Sing on, sing on, bold youth,
And hope shall lead thee to the truth !

She is lovelier than the sky,
Sweeter than the freshest bud,
I can no longer wait and sigh
Here in the moonlight flood ;
All my heart is at her feet,
All my strength at her behest ;

O sing, and bid her come to greet
The one who loves her best !
Tell her I am brave and strong,
Tell her I have loved her long ;
Singing softly, like a dove,
Tell her all you know of love
I cannot tell in song.

His manly voice entreating calls
As softly as the dewdrop falls.
He ceases, and the night winds hush
As if they too had waited long ;
The organ-river's chanting rush
Seems but an echo of his song.*
And shall he wait and plead in vain ?
Ah, no ! love is not always pain ;
For see, the folds are drawn aside,
And dimly there may be descried
A shadowy form of shadowy grace,
That halts while still in gloom arrayed,
With eyes that light the tawny face
And tresses darker than the shade.
O spell of song ! O power and thrill
Of love ! O dream that sways
The blood of youth, that feels no chill
Till love betrays !

O hark ! ye sprites that haunt this time,—
This quiet moon-lit hour,
When Cupid weaves in every clime,
His web of subtlest power,—
O, can ye hear, and not rejoice,
The music of a maiden's voice ?
"Anpetusapa's glance would meet
The night bird that can sing so sweet."

With what a bounding stride he goes !
With what a light his dark eye glows !
With what a look he seeks to fire
Those gentle eyes with his desire !
"O multiply what voice reveals ;
The bird can sing not half it feels !
Too deep, too deep, to tell in words,
And even too sweet for song of birds,
Is passion like this heart of mine
Doth feel for thine !"

She lightly steps into the light,
She gently lifts her gentle eyes,
She flies not, though her heart takes flight
And soars without disguise.

"I know thee; thou art strong and tall,
Thy fearless deeds are known to all.
O may this eve be not more fair
Than life to thee, is all my prayer."

His mighty sinews, sternly trained,
Are now with manly grace restrained,
And the fortunate touch of a fairy's wand
Far ruder would seem than the touch of his hand;
And the light of his eye like a streamlet doth flow
Where passion and tenderness mingle and flash
On the dancing ripples, whose murmuring low
From his lips seem to dash

A faithful, harmonious echo:

"Of happiness all my life will tell
If thou in my lodge doth dwell.

Oh! could you but know

The new, the glad, the tender glow
That warms my heart, so fiercely brave
When breasting battle's fiercest wave—
Could you but feel it pulse and bound
Whene'er my ear is charmed to hear
Thy gentle tongue's melodious sound—
Could you but see how these fond eyes
Rejoice to look upon thy face

When like a dream before them rise
Thy matchless form and wondrous grace—

How deeply, thirstily they drink

Thy dew-bright eyes, whose flashing glance
Doth like a luring firefly dance

(Along an island's shadowy brink

Where rippling waters, restless waters,

Sing their low, unchanging song

Upon the pebbles all night long).

Thou art a flower whose smile has made
A sunbeam pierce the forest shade;

Thou art a rose that fragrant grows

To beautify the darksome glade

And sweeten every breeze that blows.

Anpetusapa! wilt thou give

The promise that shall make me live
As I have never lived before ?
I love thee, and the powers divine
Shall teach thy heart to pulse with mine,
And bless our union evermore
While moons shall pass or starlight shine."

The guardian bosom of her lover
Serves well her modest blush to cover ;
Her willowy arms about him twine
As closely as the greenwood vine
Doth hang upon the towering oak,
That holds it safe from every stroke
And proudly shelters the delicate form
From all the buffets of the storm.
The moon and every heavenly gem
Now seem to shine alone for them.
O Time ! why must thou speed away ?
For knowest thou not that present joy
Bears no increase for such as they,
For whom all change must bring alloy ?
And thou, young Love ! canst thou not make
A lonely Eden for their sake ?
'Tis better that but two should find
Gladness of heart and peace of mind,
Than all the greater sum of life—
With burning hearts that fates unbind
And crowding thoughts that gender strife.
But no, the gift of life is one
Of strangest form, of blended tints
And crossing lines, with mingled hints
Of glory from an unseen sun ;
And shades that hourly darker grow
For those who seek that sun to know ;—
And they must take the whole or none.
So they must wake to memory
Of other things, so they must be
Reminded of the powers that hold
Their future lives, to rule and mold.

"Anpetusapa need not name
The glory of her father's fame ;
He is a mighty chief, and none
Too quickly will he choose a son."

" O fear not, my blossom,
 For he shall not see
 The flower of his bosom
 Mismated with me.
 Where war-whoops are sounding
 Their blood-stirring call,
 There I shall go bounding
 The foremost of all.
 When foemen shall fly me
 And chiefs call me brave,
 He will not deny me
 The boon I shall crave."

" Yes, thou art brave for one so young;
 This voice of mine thy feats hath sung
 When from the war-path thou returned
 On which thy first renown was earned;
 And if my love can make thy bliss,
 My service give thee happier life,
 All hope shall dwell in one kind kiss
 For thine eternal-loving wife."

" O blessed promise! future bright!
 This feeble tongue of mine can never
 Reveal how dear thou art to-night,
 How cherished thou shalt be forever!"

* * * *

The powers divine did seem to bless
 The promise of his wild caress;
 The chief approved the suitor bold,
 And for rich goods his daughter sold.
 She thought not of the trade, but went
 To her young lord with true content,
 And while she dreamed of joy to come
 Her heart was full, her lips were dumb;
 And day by day her task was wrought,
 Each hour with self-denial fraught;
 His wants were met, his lodge was trim,
 Her patient thoughts were all for him.
 And so the happy moons flew by,
 Till new refulgence filled her sky
 When there appeared a baby boy,
 Whose laugh o'erflowed her cup of joy;
 For this must prove, she could but feel,

A bond between them strong as steel.
Alas, thou too confiding wife,
What clouds were gathering o'er thy life !
For vanity alone will stay
With human nature to the last ;
Each happy day will slip away
Into the valleys of the past,
Returning but a ghostly thing
When the spirit drinks at Memory's spring.
Why did he vow to cherish ever ?
Or why allow his heart to change ?
What maid was she who came to sever
Thy love and thee ? What magic strange
Had she to work her strange endeavor ?
What mind shall solve the mystery
Of loves that come and loves that flee ?
Why should Anpetusapa give
Her heart's whole life, her richest treasure,
To one whose boasted flame could live
Though but a dozen moons' small measure ;
Whose passion was for selfish pleasure ?
Yet so it was, another came
Her heart to cloud, her place to claim.
Her lodge became another's nest ;
The first wife, she was second now ;
Neath custom's yoke compelled to bow
And see her rival fondly pressed,
The death gloom settled on her brow,
Day brought no sun, the night no rest.
The beam of sadness lit her eye,
And memories that could never die
Until her body, void of breath,
Became the precious spoil of Death.
Morn after morn beheld her still
Slow sinking, like a mountain rill
Whose fountain-head, once bubbling bright,
Has dried away, and left the white
And pulseless sand to mark where long
Began the sparkle and the song.
One joy alone was left to bring
The heart-swept thrill of other days,
When to her baby she would sing
Her lullaby of love and praise ;

And this, even this, renewed the thought
 Of joyous hopes that came to naught.
 Betrayed by faith, yet faithful to the last,
 She murmured not ; but patiently she passed
 Each day in kindly service, given
 As if her heart were all unruven,
 Until at length heroic strength
 Could bear no more.

 Upon the shore
 Of wild⁷ Messipi's plunging flood,
 Where they were camped so long before,
 They camped again ; again their blood
 Marched to the music of its roar.

 * * * *
 'Tis morning : every bird its matin sings
 And beats the air with throbbing wings,
 The air so sweet and quick ; the glistening dew
 Hangs crystal beauty on all verdant things,—
 Each trembling drop reflecting true
 The overspread, unclouded blue ;
 While from the east the cohorts of the sun
 With dazzling spears begin to strew
 The morning vapors, damp and dun,
 Whose melting ranks are closed anew
 To vanish where the rapid waters run.

Anpetusapa hides her woe
 Until her husband and her foe
 Have left the lodge and gone from sight.
 Then with a tearless eye and bright,
 She gazes madly round the place
 Where every comfort bears the trace
 Of wifely labor wrought with pain,
 Of woman's love that lives in vain.
 Here moccasins lay with bead-work gay ;
 Here on the wall the breezes sway
 The music-breathing flute,
 Whose lips are dry and mute,
 While she who once inspired its tone
 Now sits despairing and alone.
 The very curls of smoke that rise
 And mingle with the morning skies,
 Are tokens of the duties done
 Beneath the red eye of the rising sun.

Awhile she sits in cruel thought,
Till, with her anguish overwrought,
She flies to him who sweetly bears
The image of her faithless god,
And on each infant feature wears
The smiling hopes on which he trod.
Convulsively she clasps her child,
Whose love, alone left undefiled,
Is not enough to nerve her soul
Beneath its crushing weight of dole.

She listens to the roaring water,
Whose voice she heard in music grand
When she was still the old chief's daughter
And love such wondrous fortunes planned.
And ruthless phantoms of the past
Across her mind are flitting fast,
Each with a keen, envenomed dart
That poisons brain and tortures heart.
With breath too quick to lift a sigh,
With marble firmness on her brow,
With glassy wildness in her eye,
She seeks the river's margin now.
She steps into a birch canoe
Still beaded with the morning dew,
And clasping close her mother's pride,
She seeks the middle of the tide.

O hark ! thou selfish one, who gave
Embrace more treacherous than the wave :
Does not her song that mounts the air
Reproach thee with its grand despair ?
Why dost thou hurry to the river ?
Why dost thou call, why dost thou shiver,
While she whom thou didst drive away
Is bold amidst the chilly spray ?
What good is all thy vain remorse ?
Thinkst thou from jaws of death to force
A sacrifice so lightly thrust
Upon the altar of thy lust ?
A host like thee could nothing urge
To meet one tone of her sad dirge :
My heart cannot live without loving ;
My heart cannot give up its own ;

No more will I linger with sorrow,
But follow the joys that have flown;
With Death I will rest me to-morrow
On a kind, dreamless bed of stone.

I fear not the rush of the water,
For me all its terrors are vain;
It cannot bring less than gladness
For it banishes all my pain:
I will sink with my burden of sadness
And mix with the earth again.

And my baby, my darling, my blossom,
Nor falsehood nor anguish shall know;
Together we cleave the wild billow—
Unfaltering together we go
To rest on the same rocky pillow,
To slumber and mingle below.

Plunging on the sunlit stream,
The frail canoe, with trembling leaps,
Hurries toward the mists that gleam
To veil the awful steeps.
What need has she for any veil?
Despairing eyes will never quail!
See, now upon the glowing crest,
Where clouds of spray beneath her lie,
She clasps her boy upon her breast,
She gazes on the cloudless sky,
And in its blue depth seems to see
Death, robed in peaceful purity;
Then down into the boiling tomb
That makes for her the happiest doom.
How strange that peace should thus be found
Amid such tumult-breathing sound;
To leap from life and light, and find
A darkness sweeter to the mind!

* * * *

Long shall the mists of morning show
The spirit of her who long ago
Wrapped them round her wearily—
A victim of love and treachery.
Long shall her mournful death-song find
An echo in the moaning wind,
Long shall Dahkotah legend bind

That echo with the roaring falls,
The ancient, foam-crowned, giant falls,
Whose voice so oft hath given
The welcome of its watery halls,
That lead the soul, when the Great Spirit calls,
To the hunting grounds of heaven.
And though a child of the forest dark
Weary of life would here embark,
As to a portal hither comes,—
And yet who may not pass this way
Into eternal joy and day,—
The water hides and soon benumbs
The sorrow, and the cadence deep
Becomes a lullaby to hush
The spirit to its endless sleep
Beneath the surging rush,
Beneath the shrouding spray,
Where the tireless waters sweep
To their wild, unpausing leap—
Then ho for the South, away !
The flood is cold, but the heart is bold
When the future that lives new sorrow gives ;
And within the chamber halls
Of the grand and solemn falls
May be found a sleep so sweet and deep
That its darkness never palls,
While ages pass with silent creep.
Time has no tooth to tear
The heart whose pulse is dead,
And sorrow may live in the air
But not in the river-bed.
I ween all peacefully there
Is pillowed forever the head
Of a woman whose heart was fair,
Though her cheeks were dusky red.

THE FALLS OF ST. ANTHONY.

Grand old stream !

You never rest, but constantly flow
From the calm above to the riot below.

A sweep to the edge,

A leap from the ledge—

Down, down, down you go,
To roar mid the ragged rocks below.

Roar, roar, roar !

With a mighty voice ; but its deepest tone
Sounds to me like a giant's groan.

You well may groan.

The works of man, in a gold-greedy time,
Have laid their chains on the waters sublime ;

No more, no more

As wild as before—

Down, down, down you go,
To roar mid the ragged rocks below.

Chained, chained, chained,

While the years go by ; still the saddest tone
Of that noble voice never sinks to a moan.

 HEROES TRUE.

Though long the list of storied brave,
How few have lived to whom the slave
Need render thanks ; how few who cared
For others' wrongs ; how few who dared
To sacrifice for others' good
Their own good fame,—who might have stood
High with their fellow men, yet chose
The lonelier post, resolved to lose
No part of liberty or right
For selfish gains. They made their fight
Against the world. Though few, how grand
They seem when years have purged the land ;
When every freedman's growing son
May taste the fruit their valor won.
Such men are brave men—heroes true ;
To them all human thanks are due,
To them the laurel crowns belong,
And ministry of song.

TWILIGHT.

The sunset hues begin to fade away,
The rosy cloud-tips one by one are fled,
And billowy folds of quiet, sober gray
Are driving from the sky all trace of red.
The musky twilight is so calmly sped
We scarcely know when it has taken its flight ;
But now the clouds are parting overhead,
Revealing wells of azure deeply bright,
And through their vistas peep the twinkling stars of night.

MOONLIGHT.

The crescent moon illumines the silent west
With all her wealth of time-tried, mellow beams,
And in her smile night-loving eyes are blest.
O night of beauty ! Shade or forest seems
To frame some half-lit shows of starry dreams.
Now let me banish thought ! For thinking mars
The hour's enchantment ; since the light that gleams
So pure reveals unlovely lines and scars
Upon the patient face of her who rules the stars.

A NIGHT SONG.

A spirit of peace guards the river to-night
While the winds and the waves are asleep,
And the stars overhead throw a richly dim light
On the grassy yet swift gliding deep,
Making softer the shadows that fringe the dark shore,
Making mellow the lights mirrored there,
And returning to them—loveier far than before—
All the radiance they lost in the air.

If my days ran as smooth as the river below,
If my heart were as pure as the sky,
Not a soul wandering forth in this night's early glow
Would enjoy its delight more than I ;
If the scene could but shed its contentment on me,
Could my breast make a dwelling for peace,
The happiest night of my life this would be,
And the song on my lips would not cease.

A MORNING SONG.

Sunlight pure and free,
Like a golden sea—
How it breaks on my soul,
With all its rich melody
And shining billows' trembling, joyous roll.
My bosom quickly fills
With its living thrills,
Pulsings from above—
Fluttering like an angel's white wings,
Breathing rapture like the voice of love.

Gentle summer wind !
All the balm you find
Softly falls on my brow—
A wreath invisibly twined,
But radiantly informed with sunbeams now.

Drops of early dew,
Born of heavenly blue
And the incense of night—
All silently, as they grew,
They melt away into the throbbing light.
My bosom quickly fills
With its living thrills,
Pulsings from above—
Fluttering like an angel's white wings,
Breathing rapture like the voice of love.

LOST OPPORTUNITIES.

One morning, as I strolled a woodland place
And watched the sun's bright arrows glance among
The trees, a saucy bird in passing flung
A zephyr from its wings into my face.
So close it swept with all unfettered grace,
I might have caught it; then it would have sung
Its sweetest songs for me, and to my tongue
Have learned to give reply, and help to chase
The darkest hours of life from me away.
But no—free on its course allowed to go,
It came no more: like many a happy thought
Which flashes through the mind its glorious ray,
Suggesting springs of light, which never flow,
For in its bird-like flight it is not caught.

TEAR AND SMILE.

The flowers of spring are young and bright,
And deck themselves in smiles of light.
O stars of day, forever stay !
Through all the air the moisture rare
Gathers in rain-drops for the hour
When blossoms fair shall drink the shower,
And droop beneath the glistening wet
Like precious stones with sea-pearls set.
The smiles of youth are joy's warm breath,
And when they play the spirit saith,
These are too gay to pass away.
Under the lid there still lie hid
Tear-drops waiting for the hour
When sorrows bid them freely shower.
Lip and dimple but dissemble
The wrinkling care, the piteous tremble.
When flowers must die, 'tis with a sigh
We see their petals fall apart,
And smiles that fade will leave a shade
Upon the face and in the heart.
All do not die, all do not fade ;
When by-and-by our fears are laid,
See new life springing everywhere.
The tears that rise in sad young eyes
Refine the smiles that linger there ;
From cooling rain and transient glooming
The flowers burst forth in fresher blooming ;
From sorrows borne, from conquered duty,
The smile shall leap in purer beauty.
Tear and smile
Are sister blessings all the while,
And sisterly may dwell together
As sunbeams shine on dewy heather.

With merry, tuneful pace,
In wondrous windings whirled,
My wayward fancies ever chase
Each other through a dreamy world,
Mid scenes so fair, to youth
They seem the mirrored soul of truth.

THE VINE-COVERED PORCH.

On the side where last the sunlight,
Lingering like a dying torch,
Tinged with red our humble cottage
Stood the old vine-covered porch.

All about it golden blossoms
Filled the air with odors sweet,
For the fragrant honeysuckle
Clustered o'er that calm retreat.

Hours I sat and watched the waving
Of the vines, by soft winds stirred ;
Watched the coming and the going
Of the fairy humming bird.

Oft my wondering eyes have followed
Each green tendril's upward creep ;
Oft upon the smooth-worn doorstep
Nature shut those eyes in sleep.

Oft we gathered in the twilight,
'Neath that portal's welcome shade,—
Resting there, a happy household,
As we watched the daylight fade.

Sitting thus all in the gloaming,
Azure skies so pure above
Seemed to whisper heavenly blessing,
Bringing with it peace and love.

How that scene now comes to haunt me !
Thronging memories of the past—
Calling back my happy boyhood—
Bid the scalding tears flow fast.

Far from there my steps have wandered
Over land as broad as sea ;
Years have gone, and with them bright hopes,
Never to return to me.

I have mourned, for death has taken
One who loved me—O so well !
What I suffered when she left me,
Words of mine can never tell.

Friends have passed and left me lonely,
Standing like a stricken one ;
And my heart has often faltered,
Wishing that my life were done.

But a new light shines about me !
To my dazzled soul I seem
Straying in a path too pleasant
To be ought except a dream.

No, 'tis real. Another dear one
Comes to take her sacred place ;
Once again I find an idol
In a woman's angel face.

In my heart new glory dawning
Bids the long-hugged shadows flee.
Can it be the future bringeth
Peace and happiness for me ?

Shall I see them in the gloaming
As my father did of yore :
Household treasures who will love me,
Grouped about my cottage door ?

Shall I see, where I may rest me
Watching sunset's dying torch,
Fragrant honeysuckles climbing
O'er a *new* vine-covered porch ?

FAIRY TALES.

I am reminded of the many hours
Which I have passed deep in your witching lore,
For in my boyish heart you held—before
Your elfin queens had lost their magic powers—
Most high and royal state; your woodland bowers,
Your moon-lit dances on the charm-bound floor
Were real to me, and I did love to pore
Enrapt o'er stories strange of golden showers
By fairy wands on Fortune's children shed ;
And in my innocence I sometimes dreamed
That I might be of them. Ah ! long since fled
My faith in things which once so natural seemed ;
Yet still within my heart, though reason rails,
I wish you might be true, sweet fairy tales !

THE RIVER-LAKE.

After the cooling shower
 Soft is the twilight hour
 On the river-lake.
 Sweetly the plaintive note
 Gushes from whippoorwill's throat,
 Gently, gently we float,
 Light as a fine snowflake,
 Down the river-lake.
 The dripping oars at rest
 Their murmurous music wake,
 And ripple o'er the breast
 Of the peaceful river-lake.

The lovely shadows fall
 Like a sin-outshutting wall
 On the river-lake,
 Charming the hour and place.
 The holiness we trace
 In Nature's quiet grace
 Makes sacred for her sake
 All on the river-lake.
 O this is purest joy !
 This it is that makes
 Me love the wide St. Croix,
 The river-lake of lakes.

ADIEU, LITTLE ROSEBUD.

Adieu, Little Rosebud, adieu !
 My only sad parting is this,
 For I leave with regret none but you.
 Come, give me one sweet little kiss !
 'Twill be long ere my lips lose the thrill.
 'Tis gladness to know there is one—pure and true—
 One darling to think of me still.
 Farewell to the lips that are cold,
 Farewell to the hearts that forget ;
 My affections have lost every hold
 Save the arms of my innocent pet,—
 And now I must sever this too.
 No cruel farewell shall unloose the dear fold,
 But O, Little Rosebud—adieu !

MY FAIR LENORE.

The tender, brooding twilight spreads
Above the star-reflecting lake,
The silver beams that Hesper sheds
Are dancing in our tremulous wake—
And yet how light we move along ;
While, gazing on my fair Lenore,
I do not heed the boisterous song
Of revelers on the shore.

My thoughts are worship, she the shrine
Where all my aspirations rise ;
In vain those rival stars may shine,
My beacon-lights are bright blue eyes.
While ministering angels round us throng,
And bless me with my fair Lenore,
Why should I heed the boisterous song
Of revelers on the shore ?

'Tis said that o'er each love untold
The smiles of Cupid melt in tears ;
My bursting heart I all unfold—
She lifts her eyes, her joy appears,—
And then, as if that look were wrong,
The faltering voice of fair Lenore
Would bid me heed the boisterous song
Of revelers on the shore.

Ah! no, my sweet, this will not do,
Not thus you'll turn me from the track,
For all my thoughts are bound in you,—
What eyes reveal shall lips take back ?
True, dear, you have not known me long,
But well I love my fair Lenore !
Why should I heed the boisterous song
Of revelers on the shore ?

For in that look of yours I trace
A melody that heaven might hear,
A sweet refrain of womanly grace,
A soaring bird-song, fresh and clear !
If now your lips to me belong,
Sing love to me, my fair Lenore,
And I'll not heed the boisterous song
Of revelers on the shore.

MINNEHAHA.

Dash the veil of spray
From thy face away,
Greet the smiling day,—
Pretty Minnehaha.

From thy rushing wings,
From thy silver strings,
Sweetest music springs,—
Singing Minnehaha.

Who can fail to see
In thy careless glee
Best philosophy,—
Merry Minnehaha.

Nature's daughter free,
How I long to be
Wild and pure like thee,—
Happy Minnehaha.

The snow-white butterfly
Cannot pass thee by,
But seeks thy mist to die,—
Charming Minnehaha.

When the shadows fall
On thee like a pall,
Still the night-bird's call
Echoes Minnehaha.

I fain would leave the strife
With which this world is rife,
Here to pass my life
Loving Minnehaha.



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